

WHIP 6 - PERMANENT WILDLIFE OPENING (FOREST OPENING)

FOTG Practice Code 645

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this practice is to establish a permanent opening of primarily herbaceous vegetation and shrubs within woodland areas to provide food and cover benefits for early successional and upland wildlife species. Both forest openings (J1 specifications) and edge feathering (J2 specifications) are included in this WHIP practice.

B. PROGRAM POLICY

Apply this practice to woodlands.

C. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for cost share, this practice shall:

- Improve wildlife habitat benefits to an acceptable level.
- Prevent degradation of environmental benefits.
- Be maintained for the expected lifespan of the practice.
- Be included in the approved Wildlife Habitat Development Plan.
- Be applied to a minimum contiguous ten-acre tract of woodland (Forest Openings only).

D. COST-SHARE POLICY

Eligible practice components for this practice shall be determined needed by NRCS and specified in an approved Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP). This practice shall be cost shared at a rate to meet the minimal needs of the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Development Plan.

Eligible Components

Land Clearing
Minerals
Eligible Seed
Seedbed Preparation
Seeding
Shrub/Small Tree Seedlings (Forest Openings only)
Labor
Herbicide Application
Temporary Cover

Temporary cover will be eligible under one of the following conditions: (a) determined needed until required seeds or plant stock is available; (b) needed because normal planting period for the species has passed and erosion problems may occur; (c) needed because of a soil condition such as chemical residue that will not allow establishment of cover immediately; (d) on sites subject to erosion where natural regeneration will be the established

cover.

Forest wildlife openings (excluding edge feathering areas) are limited for cost share to one acre per ten acres of woodland within the treatment unit. The minimum acreage of contiguous woodland to qualify for forest openings is ten acres. Applicants may receive cost share for an opening within a woodland treatment unit of less than ten acres when the applicant's woodland is part of a larger off-site (>10 acres) woodland.

E. REQUIREMENTS

The following are requirements for this practice.

1. The seeded area shall not be grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the Long-Term Contract. Native warm season grass stands may be harvested once per year, beginning with the third growing season. Native warm season grass stands may only be harvested between July 1 and August 15.
2. Chemicals used in performing the practice must be:
 - a. Federally, state, and locally registered.
 - b. Applied according to authorized registered uses, directions on the label, and other federal or state policies and requirements.
3. A current soil test is required for all permanent, herbaceous plantings. Lime and fertilizer are NOT required for trees, shrubs, or temporary cover.

F. PLANTING TIMESPAN

Planting or sowing after the WHIP Long-Term Contract is approved by the NRCS Contracting Officer (Area Conservationist) shall be completed within the next full planting season after the clearing activity, unless the producer can provide acceptable documentation that seed stock/shrub seedlings are not available.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Consider other resource and environmental concerns (e.g., cultural, wetlands, etc.) as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws and regulations when establishing this practice. A TN-CPA-25 must be completed for each WHDP.

H. PRACTICE MAINTENANCE

This practice shall be maintained without additional federal cost share for the expected lifespan of the practice. Cost share shall be refunded if either of the following applies:

1. Participant destroys the cover during its lifespan; or

2. Cover fails to provide the desired wildlife benefits during the life of the WHIP Contract, unless the failure is caused by circumstances beyond the participant's control.

I. TECHNICAL RESPONSIBILITY

NRCS shall have technical responsibility for this practice.

J.1. SPECIFICATIONS – FOREST OPENING

Acreage Limits	Each permanent wildlife opening shall not be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre nor more than 5.0 acres in size (limited to 1 acre per 10 acres).
Site Selection	Permanent wildlife openings are limited to slopes of 12 percent or less and nonwetland (NW) sites. Erosion must be controlled at all times during installation of this practice. Linear or block openings shall be a minimum of 50 feet wide. Circular openings shall have a minimum diameter of 120 feet.
Approved Cover	<p>Natural regeneration is acceptable only on B slopes or flatter areas (slopes of 5 percent or less). With natural regeneration, cost sharing shall be available only for temporary cover or legume interseeding. Substitutions may be allowed subject to prior approval by the WHIP Program Leader or State Biologist.</p> <p>For temporary cover (corn) with eastern gamagrass, plant corn at 45-degree angle to the eastern gamagrass rows. Corn should be no-tilled. Plant ten pounds eastern gamagrass about April 1. Apply atrazine for corn following label directions. Plant early maturing corn about June 1 at a rate of 12,000-16,000 (1/7 bu./ac.) plants per acre. Harvest corn as early as possible.</p>
Requirements	<p>Temporary cover is authorized. Corn is authorized as a temporary cover with eastern gamagrass only.</p> <p>When planting shrub lespedeza, a maximum $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plot is allowed. Varieties to be used are VA-70, Amquail, or Thunbergii.</p> <p>A current soil test is required for all permanent, herbaceous plantings. Lime and fertilizer are NOT required for trees, shrubs, or temporary cover.</p>
Seedbed	For conventional herbaceous planting, a firm seedbed is recommended. Prepare by plowing and disking (or harrowing) and allow to settle. Prescribed burning (WHIP 10) may be used for site preparation.
Herbicides	Apply herbicides in accordance with label directions.

<u>Eligible Seeds or Plants</u>	<u>Seeding Rates (per acre)</u>	<u>Seeding Dates</u>
Natural Regeneration	Temporary Cover, if Needed	
Natural Regeneration with Kobe/Korean Lespedeza	15.0 lbs.	Apr. 15-June 15
Reseeding Soybean (Quailhaven)	20.0 lbs.	Apr. 15-June 15
Kobe Lespedeza	20.0 lbs.	Apr. 15-June 15
Korean Lespedeza	20.0 lbs.	Apr. 15-June 15
Partridge Pea	12.0 lbs.	Apr. 15-June 1
Eastern Gamagrass	10.0 lbs.	Dec. 1-July 1
No-till Corn (Temporary Cover)	1/7 bushel (12,000-16,000 corn plants/acre)	

Tall Grass Mixture (Deer/Turkey)

Big Bluestem	1.0 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	Dec. 1-July 1
Indiangrass	1.0 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Little Bluestem	1.0 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Sideoats Grama	1.0 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Switchgrass	0.5 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Kobe/Korean Lespedeza	5.0 lbs.	
or		
Single or Mix of	1.0 lb.	
Illinois Bundleflower		
Partridge Pea		

Short Grass Mixture (Quail/Rabbit)

Little Bluestem	3.0 lbs. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	Dec. 1-July 1
Indiangrass	0.5 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Sideoats Grama	1.0 lb. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	
Kobe/Korean Lespedeza	5.0 lbs.	
or		
Single or Mix of	1.0 lb.	
Illinois Bundleflower		
Partridge Pea		

Broadcast Planting Mixture

Switchgrass (Cave-in-Rock, Blackwell)	8.0 lbs. (PLS $\frac{1}{2}$)	Apr. 1-July 1
Kobe/Korean Lespedeza	5.0 lbs.	

<u>Eligible Seeds or Plants</u>	<u>Seeding Rates (per acre)</u>	<u>Seeding Dates</u>
Dry Site Mixture		
Red Clover	7.0 lbs.	Feb. 20 – April 1
Chicory	2.0 lbs.	Aug. 15 – Oct. 1
Crimson Clover (Temporary Cover)	5.0 lbs.	
Winter Wheat (Temporary Cover)	25.0 lbs.	

Moist Site Mixture

Ladino Clover	4.0 lbs.	Feb. 20 – April 1
Alsike Clover	5.0 lbs.	Aug. 15 – Oct. 1
Berseem Clover (Temporary Cover)	5.0 lbs.	
Winter Wheat (Temporary Cover)	25.0 lbs.	

Temporary Cover – Summer

Millet, White Proso	20.0 lbs.	May 1-July 1
Millet, Foxtail	20.0 lbs.	May 1-July 1
Buckwheat	30.0 lbs.	May 1-Aug. 1
Corn (with Eastern Gamagrass Only)	12,000-16,000 plants/acre	June 1

Temporary Cover – Winter

Crimson Clover	20.0 lbs.	Aug. 1-Oct. 1
Winter Wheat	1.5-2 bushels	Sept. 1-Oct. 20
Cereal Rye	1.5-2 bushels	Sept. 1-Oct. 20
Wheat and Crimson Clover	1 bushel; 10 lbs.	Sept. 1-Oct. 20
Rye and Crimson Clover	1 bushel; 10 lbs.	Sept. 1-Oct. 20

Shrub/Small Tree Establishment for Forest Openings: Plantings may consist of single species for shrub lespedeza or mixtures of species.

*Shrub Lespedeza	12.0 lbs.	March 1-June 1
Indigobush	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Wild Plum	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Chickasaw Plum	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1 – Apr. 1
Spicebush	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
American Beautyberry	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Chokeberry	680 plants (8x8 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1

Eligible Seeds **Seeding Rates**

<u>or Plants</u>	<u>(per acre)</u>	<u>Seeding Dates</u>
Persimmon	302 plants (12x12 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Dogwood	302 plants (12x12 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Crabapple	302 plants (12x12 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Apple (Max. ¼ acre)	302 plants (12x12 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Pines – Loblolly, White, Virginia	302 plants (12x12 spacing)	Nov. 1-Apr. 1

^{1/} PLS = Pure Live Seed

* One-fourth acre only VA-70, Amquail, Thunbergii

J.2. SPECIFICATIONS – EDGE FEATHERING

Planned Width	Woodland will have the edge opened up to increase sunlight reaching forest floor. Minimum width shall be 50 feet. Maximum width shall be 120 feet.
Site Selection	The site shall be immediately adjacent to a field or road. The site should encourage grass and shrub growth. Erosion must be controlled at all times during installation of this practice.
Approved Cover	Natural regeneration is acceptable on all slopes. Tree and shrub planting is NOT approved for Edge Feathering.
Requirements	<p>The Edge Feathering area will be divided into three zones. Each zone will be approximately 33 percent of the total width.</p> <p><u>Zone A</u> will be nearest a field edge or road. The area should be thinned with 75 percent of the total vegetation removed.</p> <p><u>Zone B</u> will have 50 percent of the total vegetation removed.</p> <p><u>Zone C</u> will have 25 percent of the total vegetation removed. There should be no defined edge between Zone C and the existing woodland.</p> <p><u>All Zones:</u> Stumps of undesirable species should be treated with an approved herbicide to prevent re-sprouting. Native desirable species such as dogwood and plum should be left undamaged. Sod forming grasses such as tall fescue and Bermuda grass should be eradicated by herbicides prior to beginning Edge Feathering practice.</p>
Herbicides	Apply approved herbicides in accordance with the label directions.